

1851



THE TEMPLE OF TRUTH;

ITS WONDERS—ITS WORSHIPPERS—AND ITS
WITNESSES.

A GREAT EXHIBITION TRACT.

“HOLY men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” Such is God’s own account of the origin of that Book, which is destined to live for ever. It is worthy to live, and be had in everlasting remembrance, and blessed are they who treat it as its value and excellence demands. The same Almighty Spirit who of old brooded over the face of the waters, and brought out of a dark, shapeless, lifeless chaos, that great world, all instinct with life, and sparkling with beauty, on which innocent Adam gazed with rapture; has moved upon the minds of men, by their tongues and pens has erected a fairer and vaster structure than creation, and one far more worthy of our notice. There is no comparison between the works of man, and the works of God, and those who have been conversant with the beauties, mysteries, and sublimities of nature, will think but little comparatively of the most perfect and prodigious productions of human minds and human hands. But we are told by infallible authority that in erecting the Temple of Truth, God has cast into the shade not only the works of man, but his own vast universe. “Thou hast exalted thy word above all thy name.” David who loved much to gaze upon creation’s wonders, turned from the heavens sparkling with God’s glory to muse on the sacred volume; the music of the spheres was not so sweet to his ear, as the voice of mercy, and when he saw the sun “come forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber,” its ray grew

dim, as his adoring heart sung "the Lord God is a sun and shield, he will give grace and glory." As mind exceeds matter, so does the glory of truth exceed all material excellency. Come then, and let us hasten to "see the great sight." God hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for his judgments "they have not known them." Millions of human eyes never caught a glimpse of the Temple of Truth : see, it stands before us. Its glorious and sublime portico wears no frowning aspect ; its lofty pinnacles are bathed in heaven's purest light, and hark the sounds of its mighty organ of praise, and the voice of countless worshippers within it, may be heard raising the unceasing hymn of praise to the God of truth. Let us draw near to gaze on God's great Exhibition, and seek to sympathize with Him in his designs in rearing this splendid Temple. He hath built it that human intellects, wearied with vanity, might have to do with eternal realities ; and that human hearts cheated, disappointed, and crushed, might find objects to lean upon and love, which will never fail, never deceive.

This Temple is *infinite*. The eye that glances upon the exterior, or dwells upon the interior of "the Crystal Palace" which man has reared, must be struck with three things. Its *beauty*—its *vastness*—and the *variety* of objects and things it contains. The head which planned, and the hands which reared it, were indeed clever in contriving, and cunning in executing. And who would have dreamed of such a magnificent building composed all of iron and glass ; and who could have imagined that in obedience to the suggestion of one princely mind, all the world should have hastened to send its rich, rare, and curious things to one spot in this far-off isle. But so it is ; our eyes see it, our hearts wonder at it. But great and beautiful as the building is, and various as the articles here grouped together ; the whole affair is but finite ; the work of man ; though of man as regards this world "in his best estate." But truth is *infinite*. You may soon measure this building which man has reared ; you may soon count over and classify all the works he can produce ; but you may as soon try to measure

boundless space, as to tell the extent of God's truth ; you may as soon essay to count the stars, or number the ocean sands, as to register all the wonders and blessings which this temple contains. Let four things in connection with Truth be duly pondered, and its infinity will at once strike, awe, overpower, and enrapture the mind. These are the purposes of the Eternal One—the facts of the Gospel—the doctrines of grace—and the promises of mercy. Truth is God thinking aloud, recording what his own hand hath wrought ; revealing the way in which he can pardon, justify, sanctify, adopt, and glorify the guilty and the unholy ; and giving utterance to his own heart's love in exceeding great and precious promises. Truth is God's own wondrous mind, incarnated in human language ; coming into contact with human thought and feeling at every point and pore. And these utterances of love, these great purposes, glorious doctrines, and precious promises ; all stand connected with *Him* who is emphatically, "THE TRUTH." The Lord Jesus is the centre of all God's plans, the substance of all doctrines, the trustee of all the promises ; which are all "yea and amen in him." His person, his offices, his work, his love, gloriously manifest Deity. Bright image of the invisible God, "light of light," our souls adore thee ; through thee his glory beams forth ; and in thee all fulness dwells :

"All our immortal hopes are laid,
In Thee our Surety and our Head ;
Thy cross, thy cradle, and thy throne,
Are big with glories yet unknown."

This infinite temple of truth, is *immutable* and *immortal*. Many fears were entertained that "the Crystal Palace" would not hold together until it was finished ; or if it did, that it would not sustain the mighty weight that would crowd its spacious galleries to witness the royal pageant on the opening day. These fears were groundless. It *has* stood the storm ; and is likely to do so. But still it is not immutable. Iron may corrode, and glass may break, or its foundation may fail. Yea, all *must* fail some time ; and the green grass grow again where so many busy feet have trodden. No one expects it to stand for ever ; and

questions have long since been mooted about its next use and destination. The curious and rich things collected together from east, west, north, and south, must all be scattered again; and all who have looked at, or may yet feast their eyes upon the great triumph of human skill and industry, must soon be cut off and flee away. Four days ago twenty thousand human beings thronged its spacious area; among them were the great, the mighty, and the learned; the very *élite* of earth's population, and it may be that ere *now* death has put his sharp sickle into that company; and for some one or more who then shouted with joy, a coffin is preparing, and a grave is being dug.

Doubtless it was an imposing sight. Our noble Queen, and her princely spouse; surrounded by a free people; and numbers of admiring foreigners assembled in such a place, amidst such monuments of human skill, and with a view to promote a friendly competition between nations, and an intercourse of a pacific nature. But after all, what did this sight, this splendid Exhibition really consist of! God's word briefly describes it, as "grass and its flower:" which being interpreted, means flesh and its glory. Yes "*flesh and its glory*," flesh *in* its glory, was here exhibited, and God declares, that the first is as grass, and the second as "the flower of grass." Again and again does he press upon us this lesson, for he knows we are slow to learn it: see Psalm. xc. 5, 6; xxxvii. 2; xcii. 7; Is. xl. 6, 8; James. i. 10, 11; 1 Pet. i. 23, 25. Hark! amidst the organ's mighty peal; and the trumpet's startling blast; yea, high above the shout of million tongues, a voice is heard, "Cry!" "What shall I cry?" is the inquiry. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field, the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass." Such art thou, O man, in all thy glory, if *destitute of the divine life; — the life of love*. If thou art not born of God, wit, riches, genius, knowledge of all science, possession of all earth's joys, yea, morality and the social virtues themselves, beautiful and useful as they are as regards this world; all, all are but as the fading flower which the breath of God will wither. Son of Adam, who art glorying in these things, or looking at them with too

fond an eye, listen once more while God finishes his testimony: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but THE WORD OF OUR GOD SHALL STAND FOR EVER."

Truth is *immutable*. The Temple of Truth stands in all its youthful prime, while generation after generation returns to dust, and centuries sweep by in rapid succession. Its foundations never shake, its bright walls are not brittle; like the New Jerusalem it has all the clearness of glass, combined with the strength of gold. Rev. xxi. 18. Its strong supporters will never rust, or corrode. Time, death, Satan, and sin, are all powerless to destroy, or even permanently to deface this fair edifice. It stands, and will stand for ever, for it is *immortal*, as well as *immutable*. When "the earthly house of this tabernacle" has fallen, the spirits of those who delighted to pay visits to this glorious Temple, shall enter it to dwell there for ever, and go no more out. Then those who now "see through a glass darkly, shall see face to face, and those who know in part, shall know even as they are known." They shall be eternal students and constant adorers in this immortal Temple, and through eternal ages have sweet and delightful fellowship with the God of Truth. That word of the Lord which endureth for ever "forms the basis of celestial instructions, and contains the rudiments of vast intellectual acquirements, which the sons of God will make in heaven under the immediate tuition of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Into this Temple we are all invited to enter now. When Peter had quoted the emphatic words of Isaiah, which we have just been listening to, he adds, with equal earnestness and emphasis, "And *this* is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto *you*." Here we have what Isaiah calls "*good tidings of good*." "God reveals just what we need, and freely invites us to make use of it. He rears the Temple of Truth, throws wide its spacious doors, and sends forth a free invitation to "every creature" (Mark xvi. 15) to enter and be blessed. Thus tickets may be obtained freely, not merely season-tickets for a few months, but tickets for life, yea, for eternity. But the season for issuing them will not last always, therefore apply in time; "*now* is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." "Wisdom hath builded her house,

she hath hewn out her seven pillars, she hath sent forth her maidens, she cried upon the highest places of the city;" and *who* are thus invited? "The simple, and him that wanteth understanding." Alas! that so few should give heed to the invitation; that the great God should stretch out his hand, and so few regard. "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?" The day of God will give an answer to *that* question, to the eternal confusion of all triflers with divine truth. But some few are wending their way toward this noble edifice; let us enter with them through yon ever open door. How glorious is this temple! "surely this is none other than the House of God, and the very gate of heaven"! What melody breaks upon the ear! The prophets' lyre, the angels' voice, and the harps of the redeemed, all sweetly mingle; but above all, God's voice is heard welcoming the returning ones, and proclaiming in their ears the glories of that Saviour "in whom He is well-pleased." How sweet is the perfume that fills this temple! The spicy groves of Araby have nought to compare therewith: for the glorious name of Jesus is as "ointment poured forth." But mostly do we here find employment for the eye; and what wonders meet us wherever we look. Here the treasures of eternity are gathered together, and the wonders of the world above may be viewed. Chiefly let us employ ourselves in reading some of the innumerable inscriptions which cover the crystal walls of this divine edifice; they are not written in mysterious and obsolete hieroglyphics, but all so plain that the fool need not err, and a child may understand. They are not like the painted windows in which superstition so much delights, which keep out heaven's light, and teach falsehood by pictorial representations. Every character is perfect, for all is written in letters of light and love with God's own finger. Poor dying sinners, look and live; behold, it is written in large characters, "where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound." "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." Doubting heart, look and dismiss thy fears! read that short but wondrous declaration, "God delighteth in mercy;" and another sentence, written beneath it, shows the reason

why ; it is "because he is just, while he justifieth the sinner who believes in Jesus." Tempted soul, sorely wounded by the arrows of a cruel one, lift up thy eyes and read, "if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, *we shall be saved by his life.*" (Rom. v. 10.) Mourners over lost joys, bereaved, widowed, troubled hearts ; sons of poverty, toil, woe, and want, look, *all of you*, for Jehovah, the Infinite One, writes, and you may read it through your tears, that he "pitieth you as a father doth his children," and that "he will be the strength of your hearts, and your portion for ever." He tells you all who have received his dear Son, and who rest upon his faithful word, that soon "the days of your mourning shall be ended," and that your light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for you a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

But, O how important is it that all who enter the Temple of Truth should take the attitude of the worshippers of the God of truth. Alas for those who come to reason, to object, to speculate, to do anything, and everything, rather than "receive the truth in the love of it, that they may be saved." Let reason bow down before the majesty of truth ; and the affections revere the love and mercy so sweetly combined with the majesty. Let the once stubborn will worship the beauty of holiness as it shines forth in the majestic face of truth ; yea, let none be satisfied without heart adoration of truth. Here there is no danger of idolatry ; here, reverence cannot be excessive ; the point to be attained to, is to have "every thought brought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ."

The inscriptions in this temple, furnish the happy worshippers with themes for praise, with matter for prayer, with subjects for meditation. How lofty are the anthems prepared for their use ; how suited the words which they are told "to take with them when they turn unto the Lord ;" and what discourses on God's great attributes, and glorious names, and mighty acts, are provided for the use of the devout meditant. In large letters, and in many places, is written kind promises of Divine guidance and "inward teaching." One

device, above all others, fixes the attention, and encourages the hopes of all true worshippers. It is a Cross in connection with a Throne, and a Dove descending from the Throne *by* the Cross, *to* those around it; and underneath this device is written, "It is expedient for *you* that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but, if I depart, I will send him unto you. I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH. When he, THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH is come; he will guide you into all truth. He shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine and show it unto you."

And with what a glorious company is the worshipper in the Temple of Truth associated, and from what mistakes and dangers does this humble and adoring frame of heart save him. In this great temple the throne of the Eternal is erected, and those who enter there as humble scholars, and hearty worshippers, shall meet his approving eye, and gaze upon his glory. They shall hear from the lips of him, who calls himself "*the Truth*," and who is seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high,—the sweet and gentle invitation "learn of me." Jesus will teach all who resign themselves to his guidance, and for them he will breathe the interceding prayer, "Father, sanctify them by thy truth." They shall find themselves among millions of lofty intellects, and all earnestly investigating truth, all willing to impart what they know. Thus, shut in with the God of Truth; with Jesus, "*the Truth*," and his followers, they shall be made free, and shall be nourished up to eternal life; shall be preserved from deluding vanities, and destructive errors; be trained up for "the inheritance of the saints in light," and be capacitated to become *witnesses for God*, and his truth, in this world of error, darkness, and delusion.

And what greater honour can be conferred upon a creature, than to be a witness for the light; sent forth and qualified by God himself, to protest against error, and promulgate truth. Thus, the Lord Jesus regarded it, when at Pilate's bar he testified, "for this cause was I born, and for this purpose came I into the world, that

I might bear witness to the truth," John xviii. 37, and he added, "every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." And what is the voice of Jesus to his people, to all whom his grace hath drawn to be humble worshippers in the Temple of Truth? "Go ye forth into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Such is the duty of the church at *all times*, and *this* is the duty especially incumbent on all Christians at this *particular season*.

There are three things connected with this particular season which we should duly consider, in order to understand what is *our duty*. There will be a large influx of strangers—of strange superstitions—and of strange fears and forebodings. Many people from distant countries have come already to Britain's metropolis, and many more are on their way. Among them will be representatives of almost all the superstitions of the earth, and some among them, aided by the emissaries of error dwelling among us, will doubtless seek to spread their pernicious sentiments. For error cannot be quiet, or says an old writer, "it would not be like its father." The prospect of this great gathering has given birth to many anticipations of evil, and it is feared that civil liberty, social order, and the interest of trade may be endangered by this heterogeneous gathering. Most probably these fears, like many others, will be found to be baseless. "Is there any fear, captain?" said a lady, when the waves were rather rough. "Plenty of fear, madam, but no danger," was the reply. We shall be right glad if the result proves the same, as regards the fears of many in the case before us. Still we cannot help thinking but there is *some* danger. The Lord Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together *in my name*, there am I in the midst of them." And there is reason to fear that if two or three hundred thousand, more or less, gather together in their *own name*, and *without* his name, Satan will be in the midst of them; and so the prince of this world will work at some of his evil designs.

Here are two historic scenes in sacred Writ worthy of being pondered over on the present occasion. The plains of Shinar, and the city of Jerusalem; the con-

fusion of tongues, and the* day of Pentecost. On the former occasion, man proposed "to build a city, and a tower, whose top should reach to heaven, *to get themselves a name.*" On the latter, encouraged by a gracious promise of their best friend, a few lovers of truth proposed to build a spiritual temple which should stand in heaven for ever, by which God should get himself an everlasting name. The one wished to lift earth up to heaven, and the other to bring heaven down to earth. The one ended in confusion, babbling, and separation; and the other in order, communion, and indissoluble union. Which of these two events will our great gathering in London resemble? This depends under God, upon *how* Christians feel and act; upon the power they have with God in prayer, and the influence they are enabled to exert upon their fellow creatures. Our God can, as is his wont, bring order out of confusion, and light out of darkness. He can overrule man's vast earthly projects, for the fulfilling of his glorious purposes, and he will if we besiege his throne. He can make use of feeble instruments to effect great things, and if we are willing trophies of his truth, he will make us successful testifiers of the same. He can make our London another Jerusalem, from whence living water, even his own saving truth, shall flow. He can send Ethiopians back home, reading his own blessed book; and make the mighty ones who are come from distant climes, feel as did Sheba's Queen of old, when she exclaimed "the half has not been told me."

Such are our circumstances, such the power of our God; and such the instructive examples his Word furnishes us with. What then is our duty? Let us entertain the strangers, Heb. xiii. 2. The world will seek to do this after *its* fashion. Folly will spread her table, and open wide the doors of her soul-destroying palaces, Prov. ix. 13—18. Satan has been more busy in making preparations than any of the contributors to the Great Exhibition, or even the builder of the Crystal Palace; and shall Christians be at rest, and not "come to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Conscience answers, no! Consistency says, no! and above all love says, "the God of heaven, he will prosper us, there-

fore we his servants will arise and work." Neh. ii. 20. Let us then engage, wisely and honestly, in opposing superstition by spreading truth. Superstition is dark and cruel; let us meet it with *truth and love*. "Speaking lies in hypocrisy," are the weapons of Antichrist. "Speaking the truth in love," are the weapons of Christianity. By every means let truth be circulated; for we may never have such an opportunity. "Cast we then the bread upon the waters, we shall find it after many days; give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for we know not what evil may be upon the earth." Let the rich give of their abundance: and all give according to their ability. Let all who can speak a word for God, do so *now*. Let us in the same sense as the apostle meant it, "become all things to all men, if by any means we may save some." And while thus labouring to make known the great salvation, let us never forget *to encourage ourselves in the Lord our God*. True there are dangers around us. Rome is menacing us, those mean and miserable imitators of her sorceries, the Puseyites, are working still greater mischief, by ruining the church whose bread they eat; and many who come over to see the world's fair, may sow seeds of evil among us. But if our danger was still greater, have we not the shadow of the All-sufficient to nestle under; and the arm of the Almighty to appeal to? Even if our Ziklag were burned, 1 Sam. xxx., with God's anointing oil upon us, we would not despair; like David we would "encourage ourselves in the Lord our God;" and hope to recover all.

One parting word. Our *special* duty as Christians, at this particular season, may be expressed in two words, EXHIBIT CHRISTIANITY. There is nothing beneath yon glass dome to be compared with this. Nothing so beautiful, so wonderful, so beneficial. But, dear friends, are we prepared to act thus? Is the article ready, and ready for action? A mere model, or a rough outline of Christianity will not do; we want the thing itself; all instinct with God's own life; yet working by human hearts, heads, and hands, and working to promote his glory, and the good of man. This, brethren, is our high calling. "To be blameless and harmless, the sons

of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom *shine ye as light in the world, HOLDING FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE.*" In these days, when so many are putting the Church in the place of Christ, and crying up a fancied apostolical succession as the only channel of grace, it is important that the true Church should understand her real mission, and enter heartily upon it. The Church of Antichrist may dangle her keys, but they only introduce into darkness and perdition. The deluded Puseyites may rave of the power of baptism to regenerate, which all truth and all facts flatly contradict. Vain men on whose heads the hand of a Bishop has been laid, but who are destitute alike of gifts or grace for the solemn office on which they intrude; may call themselves the successors of the apostles; but God calls his people "the Church of the living God, the pillar and basis of the truth." We must possess God's life, or we cannot be his witnesses, 1 Tim. iii. 15. Let all who are begotten by the Word of Life, who are saved and sanctified by the truth, *exhibit that truth constantly and consistently.* Let each believer seek grace to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things;" and let all God's people associated together in the bonds of love, "strive together for the faith of the Gospel." Let this be their constant aim to *preserve* the truth from being mixed with error; to *promulgate* the Gospel whenever they have opportunity; and to seek to *promote* each other's faith in Christ, and hope in the God of truth. We who are on the Lord's side must not faint nor grow weary, while Jesus pleads with his Father, "Let them rejoice and be glad that favour my righteous cause."

"Truth, crush'd to earth, must rise again;
The eternal years of God are her's;
But Error, wounded, writhes with pain,
And dies among her worshippers."

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